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3400 Forest Pest Management

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Root Disease in the Proposed Change Sale Area, Columbia Gorge

Forest Supervisor, Mt. Hood NF

On May 7, Gregory Filip and Alan Kanaskie, Plant Pathologist and Biological Technician, respectively, from the Regional Office visited the Columbia Gorge Ranger District, Mt. Hood National Forest, to examine a proposed timber sale area suspected of having root disease. They were accompanied by Katie Berry and Clyde Shaver, Sale Planning Specialist and Reforestation Specialist, respectively, from the District.

The proposed Change Sale (T. 2S., R. 6 E., sec 6), will occur in about 200 acres of mature Douglas-fir and western hemlock with some western redcedar. Some of the area had been commercially thinned in the past. They saw several scattered pockets of Douglas-fir damaged by laminated root rot caused by the fungus *Phellinus weirii*. Some trees were windthrown, and showed characteristic "root-balls" caused by the fungus. Other trees were standing and alive, but showed advanced above-ground symptoms of root rot such as thin, ragged crowns. Western hemlocks and cedars appeared unaffected.

The District plans to clearcut where the largest root disease centers occur. Because of the potential for disease spread from infected residual stumps to regeneration, it was recommended that Douglas-fir not be planted in the clearcut areas where root disease pockets occur since this species is very susceptible to laminated root rot. Instead, where possible, western redcedar or red alder should be planted, since these species are very resistant to laminated root rot. Western hemlock, although not as resistant as cedar or alder but more resistant than Douglas-fir, could be planted or allowed to regenerate naturally where cedar or alder cannot be grown. It must be emphasized that if Douglas-fir is planted or allowed to regenerate naturally in areas with infected residual stumps, greater damage can be expected in the next rotation.

Some sites within the area will be commercially thinned rather than clearcut. In such areas where laminated root rot is evident, it was recommended that trees within 50 feet of root-diseased trees not be thinned. Some of these trees, although healthy appearing, may be infected also, have decayed root systems, and therefore, may be windthrown if the stand is opened by thinning. Tree marking crews trained to recognize laminated root rot could easily do this with little additional effort.

If Forest Pest Management staff can be of additional assistance, please contact us.

GREGORY M. FILIP

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